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Elkridge Patch

CSX Admits Misstep in Failing to Reveal Land Purchases Near Controversial Hanover Train Site

Officials of CSX Transportation concede they purchased land off Hanover and Race Roads and made an “unintentional factual error” when claiming otherwise.

By [Elizabeth Janney](#) | April 18, 2011

As far as the federal government is concerned, CSX Transportation is eyeing four sites in central Maryland for its freight transfer station. But the company has now admitted it has purchased land near the proposed Hanover site and not near any of the other three locations.

Since CSX will be using federal land, accepting federal funds and needing federal permits to build the station, the company is required by Washington to be transparent with citizens potentially affected by the project.

After pressure from citizens who live near the proposed site at Hanover and Race Roads, CSX conceded in an e-mail that it had purchased properties near the Hanover site. Residents had already discovered that land had changed hands.

Rick Hood, assistant vice president for CSX Real Estate, characterized the company’s failure to reveal the purchase as a minor misstep in an April 13 e-mail to Elkridge officials. A copy of the e-mail was obtained by Patch.

“Recently, at a meeting in Elkridge about our proposed rail intermodal facility, a CSX colleague made a minor and unintentional factual error,” the e-mail said. “He described the properties at one of the four alternative sites as ‘under option.’ That was a mistake. Two small parcels within one of the sites had been acquired at the time.”

The properties purchased by a CSX subsidiary in December 2010 were at 6256 Race Road and 6549 Hanover Road, according to Maryland’s Department of Assessments and Taxation. The company invested almost \$1 million to make the two purchases.

CSX officials told Patch that the company had not purchased land at any of the other sites. However, a spokesman for CSX said, “Discussions are under way with property owners at the other sites.”

The other three sites are at Montevideo Road (Howard County), Brock Bridge Road (Anne Arundel County) and in Beltsville (Prince George’s County).

When [residents expressed concern about property being bought](#) up by CSX at the March 24 Greater Elkridge Community Association meeting, Maryland Department of Transportation Chief of Staff Leif Dormsjo denied that any property had changed hands. “We’ve given properties options,” Dormsjo said. “We have not purchased any properties at this point.”

CSX is at the beginning of a yearlong process—under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)—to assess the environmental, social and economic impact of its train facility at each of the four sites. The facility would encompass at least 70 acres and would be a place for trucks and trains to swap freight via electric cranes. The state of Maryland is contributing up to \$75 million for the \$150 million facility, with CSX and federal agencies picking up the rest.

The Council on Environmental Quality, which manages NEPA for the government, states in its [guidelines](#): “The transparency of a process should give skeptical parties the assurance that there is nothing happening behind the scenes.”

“CSX is committed to the NEPA process reviewing the four potential sites,” said Bob Sullivan, spokesman for CSX. He told Patch that no other purchases have occurred near the Hanover Road site but “other properties are under contingent purchase agreements.”